

Message on the Observance of Christmas 2001

December 20, 2001

Christmas is a time of wonder and joy, of generosity and peace, that brings family and friends together in celebration and song. We sing old hymns and familiar carols, we show love for others in the giving of gifts, and we observe the hallowed traditions that make the season special. This year in the midst of extraordinary times, our Nation has shown the world that though there is great evil, there is a greater good. Americans have given of themselves, sacrificing to help others and showing the spirit of love and sharing that is so much a part of the Christmas season.

According to the Gospel of Luke, two thousand years ago, the savior of mankind came into the world. Christians believe that Jesus' birth was the incarnation of God on earth, opening the door to new hope and eternal life. At Christmastime, Christians celebrate God's love revealed to the world through Christ. And the message of Jesus is one that all Americans can embrace this holiday season—to love one another.

This Christmas we remember those who are without their loved ones. They continue to be in our hearts and prayers. May they experience peace, and may they find hope. And as we again celebrate Christ's birth, may the glorious light of God's goodness and love shine forth from our land.

Laura joins me in wishing you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. May God's blessings of peace be upon us and upon the world.

George W. Bush

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this message.

Executive Order 13248— Establishing an Emergency Board To Investigate a Dispute Between United Airlines, Inc., and Its Mechanics and Related Employees Represented by the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers

December 20, 2001

A dispute exists between United Airlines, Inc., and its employees represented by the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers.

The dispute has not heretofore been adjusted under the provisions of the Railway Labor Act, as amended (45 U.S.C. 151–188) (the “Act”).

In the judgment of the National Mediation Board, this dispute threatens substantially to interrupt interstate commerce to a degree that would deprive sections of the country of essential transportation service.

Now, Therefore, by the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the United States, including sections 10 and 201 of the Act (45 U.S.C. 160 and 181), it is hereby ordered as follows:

Section 1. Establishment of the Board (Board). There is established, effective December 21, 2001, a Board of three members to be appointed by the President to investigate and report on this dispute. No member may be pecuniarily or otherwise interested in any organization of airline employees or any air carrier. The Board shall perform its functions subject to the availability of funds.

Sec. 2. Report. The Board shall report to the President with respect to this dispute within 30 days of its creation.

Sec. 3. Maintaining Conditions. As provided by section 10 of the Act, from the date of the creation of the Board and for 30 days after the Board has submitted its report to the President, no change in the conditions out of which the dispute arose shall be made by the parties to the controversy, except by the agreement of the parties.

Sec. 4. Records Maintenance. The records and files of the Board are records of the Office of the President and upon the Board's termination shall be maintained in the physical custody of the National Mediation Board.

Sec. 5. Expiration. The Board shall terminate upon the submission of the report provided for in section 2 of this order.

George W. Bush

The White House,
December 20, 2001.

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., December 26, 2001]

NOTE: This Executive order will be published in the *Federal Register* on December 27.

Executive Order 13240—Council of Europe in Respect of the Group of States Against Corruption

December 18, 2001

By the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the United States, including section 1 of the International Organizations Immunities Act (22 U.S.C. 288) (the "Act"), and having found that the Council of Europe in Respect of the Group of States Against Corruption (GRECO) is a public international organization in which the United States participates within the meaning of the Act, I hereby designate GRECO as a public international organization entitled to enjoy the privileges, exemptions, and immunities conferred by the Act. This designation is not intended to abridge in any respect privileges, exemptions, or immunities that such organization may have acquired or may acquire by international agreement or by law.

George W. Bush

The White House,
December 18, 2001.

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., December 20, 2001]

NOTE: This Executive order was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on December 21, and it was published in the *Federal Register* on December 21.

Remarks on the New Oval Office Carpet and an Exchange With Reporters

December 21, 2001

Review of 2001

The President. Don't step on the new rug! [Laughter]

We wanted you to see the new rug. It's a tradition for each President to design a rug. And Laura helped design this rug, and I think she did a fantastic job, as you can see. It's just beautiful.

That's the seal in the middle. The border here has got a little Texan in it.

The First Lady. We have the Lone Star.

The President. The Lone Star. The rays are, I think, very dramatic. And so we wanted you to come by and take a look at it.

The other thing is, it's been an extraordinary year for us. We will continue to ask the good Lord's blessings on America during the holiday season, particularly on those who suffered incredible loss. And we—I hope our soldiers are safe overseas. We appreciate the job they do.

I'm real proud of how the administration and our Government has responded to the attacks on America: Got a good strategy in the first phase of the war, to rout terror; held the doctrine that says that we will bring the murderers to justice and we will hold those accountable who help the murderers; responded quickly to threats to our homeland. Tom Ridge is doing a really good job in coordinating with those whose job it is to keep America safe.

Every morning I come into the desk, and I would read the threat assessments to America. And it reminds me that my most important job of all is to protect the American people from further attack.

On the domestic front, I'm really pleased with what's happened in the Congress to get the education bill, a significant piece of education reform that believes that the Nation should have high standards for every single child and that we ought to make sure that when we spend money that there's results. And along those lines, we also—this bill trusts the local governments to make many decisions about educating children.